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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/734,353

12/12/2003

Lawrence W. Hu

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LAW OFFICE OF ALAN W. CANNON
942 MESA OAK COURT
SUNNYVALE, CA 94086

EXAMINER

O'CONNOR, CARY E

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3732

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

10/09/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/734,353

Applicant(s)

HU ET AL.

Examiner

Cary E. O'Connor

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 July 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,5-10,12,13,15,16,69-71,77 and 84-112 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 69-71,77 and 109-112 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,5-10,12,13,15,16 and 84-108 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 1/12/04
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election with traverse of Group I in the reply filed on July 12, 2007 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that it would not be an undue burden to examine all the claims together. This is not found persuasive because a mere allegation that the requirement is in error does not comply with the requirement to specifically point out the reasons on which he or she bases the conclusions that a requirement to restrict is in error. Furthermore, the search for the Group II and III claims is substantially different than that of the Group I claims.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

Claims 69-77, 109-112 have been withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicant timely traversed the restriction (election) requirement in the reply filed on July 12, 2007.

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422

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F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1, 2, 5-10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 101-108 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory double patenting over claims 1, 2, 5-10, 12, 13, 15, 16 of U. S. Patent No. 6,685,632 since the claims, if allowed, would improperly extend the "right to exclude" already granted in the patent.

The subject matter claimed in the instant application is fully disclosed in the patent and is covered by the patent since the patent and the application are claiming common subject matter, as follows: the difference between the application claims and the patent claims lies in the fact that the patent claims include more elements and are thus much specific. Thus the invention of the patent claims are in effect a "species" of the "generic" invention of the application claims. It has been held that the generic invention is "anticipated" by the "species". See *In re Goodman*, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993). Since the application claims are anticipated by the patent claims, they are not patentably distinct from the patent claims.

Furthermore, there is no apparent reason why applicant was prevented from presenting claims corresponding to those of the instant application during prosecution of

the application which matured into a patent. See *In re Schneller*, 397 F.2d 350, 158 USPQ 210 (CCPA 1968). See also MPEP § 804.

Claims 84-100 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 and 5 of U.S. Patent No. 6,685,632 in view of Hancock (6,331,157). The patented claim does not include a retractor with a drive mechanism and first and second retractor blades wherein the instrument is mountable to at least one of the blades. Hancock shows a system comprising a drive mechanism 22 and first and second retractor blades 24, 26. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the patented claims with the retractor shown by Hancock, in order to provide a stable support for the instrument mount and stabilizer.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1, 2, 13, 15, 16, 84-89, 92-100 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Hancock (6,331,157). Hancock shows an instrument mount apparatus 72 for positioning a surgical instrument comprising a mount body 92 having a

base portion 90 moveably coupled at a first articulating joint (ball and socket joint) 112 and a side portion 94 moveably coupled at a second articulating joint (ball and socket joint), and an actuator 122, 124, 154 operatively connected to the first and second articulating joints, wherein the first and second articulating joints being freely moveable when the actuator is in an unlocked position. The first and second articulating joints are compressed each into a substantially immovable condition when the actuator is placed in a locked position. The first articulating joint is at an angle relative to the second articulating joint. As to claim 84, Hancock shows a system 20 comprising a drive mechanism 22 and first and second retractor blades 24, 26.

Claims 101-106 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Cartier (6,102,854). Cartier shows an instrument mount apparatus for positioning a surgical instrument, the apparatus comprising: a grip member 521 configured to lock to and release from a stable support (retractor blade 4), at least one joint member (ball joint 54, 56) for movably connecting the surgical instrument to the grip member; and a locking mechanism. The locking mechanism is actuatable to both lock the grip member to the stable support and lock an orientation of the surgical instrument with respect to said grip member. Prior to locking the grip member, the grip member is slidable with respect to the retractor. The surgical instrument is a stabilizer 30.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the

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invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 107 and 108 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cartier (6,102,854) in view of Benetti et al (2001/0044572). The stabilizer of Cartier does not comprise a plurality of interconnecting links articulating with the joint member and the stabilizer. Benetti show a stabilizer system comprising an instrument mount, a stabilizer where the mount and the stabilizer are connected by a plurality of interconnecting links. A cable runs through the links and when a tension is applied thereto, the links are fixed. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to replace the rod of Cartier, with the flexible system of Benetti, to enable the surgeon to place the stabilizer in many more orientations.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Cary E. O'Connor whose telephone number is 571-272-4715. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 7:00-3:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Cris Rodriguez can be reached on 571-2724964. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


Cary E. O'Connor
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3732

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